

## **Staff holiday reading list 2017**

compiled by Pat Pledger from suggestions from members of the OZTL\_NET listserv.

**Duels and Deceptions** by Cindy Anstey. Miss Lydia Whitfield, heiress to the family fortune, has her future entirely planned out. She will run the family estate until she marries the man of her late father's choosing, and then she will spend the rest of her days as a devoted wife. Confident in those arrangements, Lydia has tasked her young law clerk, Mr. Robert Newton, to begin drawing up the marriage contracts. Everything is going according to plan. Until the day Lydia - and Robert along with her - is kidnapped. (Publisher) Recommended by Nicole Yule.

**A Man Called Ove** by Fredrik Backman. The international phenomenon: quirky and bittersweet, heartbreaking yet outrageously funny, A Man Called Ove is a life-affirming fable for our times. (Publisher) Recommended by Michelle Janik-Sands.

**The Dark Lake** by Sarah Bailey. A beautiful young teacher has been murdered, her body found in the lake, strewn with red roses. Local policewoman Detective Sergeant Gemma Woodstock pushes to be assigned to the case, concealing the fact that she knew the murdered woman in high school years before. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Victoria** by Julia Baird. When Alexandrina Victoria was crowned Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on 20 June 1837, she was 18 years old and barely five feet tall. Her subjects were fascinated and intrigued; some felt sorry for her. Writer Thomas Carlyle, watching her gilded coach draw away from the coronation, said: 'Poor little Queen, she is at an age at which a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself; yet a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink.' (Publisher) Not a quick read, but a wonderful insight into one of the world's most interesting characters. It is based on detailed historical research, however reads like a narrative. Something to really get into during the holidays. Recommended by Elizabeth Lansdown.

**The One Memory of Flora** Banks by Emily Barr. YA. Flora has anterograde amnesia. She can't remember anything day-to-day: the joke her friend made, the instructions her parents gave her, how old she is. Then she kisses someone she shouldn't, and the next day she remembers it. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Rush Oh!** by Shirley Barrett. When the eldest daughter of a whaling family in Eden, New South Wales, sets out to chronicle the particularly difficult season of 1908, the story she tells is poignant and hilarious, filled with drama and misadventure. Recommended by Deb Connell.

**City of thieves** by David Benioff. Four months into the siege of Leningrad, the city is starving. Seventeen-year-old Lev fears for his life when he is arrested for looting the body of a dead German paratrooper, while his charismatic cellmate Kolya, a handsome young soldier arrested for desertion, seems bizarrely unafraid. Dawn brings, instead of the execution squad, an impossible challenge. Lev and Kolya can find a dozen eggs for an NKVD colonel to use for his daughter's wedding cake, and live. (Publisher). Recommended by Mary Davidson.

**Alpha. Abidjan - Gare du Nord** by Bessora and Barroux. Graphic novel. Alpha Coulibaly is emblematic of the refugee crisis today - just one of millions on the move, at the mercy of people traffickers, endlessly frustrated, endangered and exploited as he attempts to rejoin his family, already in Europe. With a visa, Alpha's journey would take a matter of hours; without one he is adrift for eighteen months. Along the way he meets an unforgettable cast of characters, each one giving another human face to the crisis. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Family Skeleton** by Carmel Bird. A quirky book about a matriarch and her family from Melbourne's Catholic establishment, it is clever, witty and insightful -the title itself is a play on words. After her husband's death, Margaret decides to write a journal, and discovers more than she had anticipated. Not only did her beloved husband take his secret to the grave, her adored father had one as well. The skeleton is both literal and figurative. Beautifully crafted, this is a top holiday read (Jenny Watts) Recommended by Jenny Watts.

**A Writing Life : Helen Garner and her Work** by Bernadette Brennan. *A Writing Life* is the first full-length study of Garner's work, a literary portrait that maps Garner's writing against the different stages of her life. (Publisher) Recommended by Deb Connell.

**A Dry White Season** by Andre Brink. 'As startling and powerful as when first published more than two decades ago, Andre Brink's classic novel, *A Dry White Season*, is an unflinching and unforgettable look at racial intolerance, the human condition, and the heavy price of morality.' [Book Depository] Recommended by Kerry Neary.

**Year of wonders** by Geraldine Brooks. A young woman's struggle to save her family and her soul during the most extraordinary year of 1666, when plague suddenly visited a small Derbyshire village and the villagers, inspired by a charismatic preacher, elected to quarantine themselves to limit the contagion. An oldie but a goodie recommended by Craig Edgman.

**Good Morning Midnight** by Lily Brooks-Dalton. Augustine, a brilliant, ageing scientist, is consumed by the stars. For years he has scanned the universe, trying to quantify infinity, to look back at the beginning of time itself. When news of a catastrophic event arrives at the remote research centre in the Arctic circle where he works and the researchers are evacuated, he insists on staying behind. But shortly after the last airlift departs, Augustine discovers a mysterious child - Iris. As time wears on, Augustine is unable to establish contact with the outside world. They are alone. (Publisher). Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**The Muse** by Jessie Burton. A picture hides a thousand words ... On a hot July day in 1967, Odelle Bastien climbs the stone steps of the Skelton gallery in London, knowing that her life is about to change forever. Having struggled to find her place in the city since she arrived from Trinidad five years ago, she has been offered a job as a typist under the tutelage of the glamorous and enigmatic Marjorie Quick.(Publisher) Recommended by Dee Mcqueen.

**No Virgin** by Anne Cassidy. My name is Stacey Woods and I was raped. Stacey is the victim of a terrible sexual attack. She does not feel able to go to the police, or talk about it to anybody other than her best friend, Patrice. Patrice, outraged, when she cannot persuade her to go to the police, encourages Stacey to write everything down. This is Stacey's story. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Long Way to a Small Angry Planet** by Becky Chambers. Longlisted for the 2016 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. When Rosemary Harper joins the crew of the *Wayfarer*, she isn't expecting much. The *Wayfarer*, a patched-up ship that's seen better days, offers her everything she could possibly want: a small, quiet spot to call home for a while, adventure in far-off corners of the galaxy, and distance from her troubled past. But Rosemary gets more than she bargained for with the *Wayfarer*. (Publisher) Recommended by Rosemary Kelleher.

**My Lovely Frankie** by Judith Clarke. In the 1950s, 'entering' the seminary was for ever, and young boys were gathered into the priesthood before they were old enough to know what they would lose. Tom went to St Finbar's because he was looking for something more than the ordinary happiness of his home and school. But then he discovered that being able to love another person was the most important thing of all.

For Tom, loving Frankie made him part of the world. Even when Frankie was gone... (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**We come apart** by Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan. YA. Jess would never have looked twice at Nicu if her friends hadn't left her in the lurch. Nicu is all big eyes and ill-fitting clothes, eager as a puppy, even when they're picking up litter in the park for community service. He's so not her type. Appearances matter to Jess. She's got a lot to hide. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Take Three Girls** by Cath Crowley, Fiona Wood, Simmone Howell. ADY - not the confident A-Lister she appears to be. KATE - brainy boarder taking risks to pursue the music she loves. CLEM - disenchanted swim-star losing her heart to the wrong boy. All are targeted by PSST, a toxic website that deals in gossip and lies. St Hilda's antidote to the cyber-bullying? The Year 10 Wellness program. Nice try - but sometimes all it takes is three girls. (Publisher) Recommended by Trish Buckley. This book may have content that is not suitable for some library collections. If considering inclusion in a school library collection, it may be thought suitable for senior secondary readers only, under some collection policies - Anne Weaver

**The Girl Before** by J.P. Delaney. Jane stumbles on the rental opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to live in a beautiful ultra-minimalist house designed by an enigmatic architect, on condition she abides by a long list of exacting rules. After moving in, she discovers that a previous tenant, Emma, met a mysterious death there - and starts to wonder if her own story will be a re-run of the girl before. (Publisher) Recommended by Mary Davidson.

**Neon Pilgrim** by Lisa Dempster. Brushing aside the barriers that other people might find daunting – the 1200km of mountainous terrain, the sweltering Japanese summer, the fact she has no money and has never done a multi-day hike before – Lisa is determined to walk the pilgrimage, or die trying. (Publisher) Recommended by Nicole Yule.

**The Baltimore Boys** by Joel Dicker. *The Baltimore Boys*. The Goldman Gang. That was what they called Marcus, and his cousins Hillel and Woody. Three brilliant young men with their whole lives ahead of them, before their kingdom crumbled beneath the weight of lies, jealousy and betrayal. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Her** by Garry Disher. Out in that country the sun smeared the sky and nothing ever altered, except that one day a scrap man came by . . . HER name is scarcely known or remembered. All in all, she is worth less than the nine shillings and sixpence counted into her father's hand. She bides her time. She does her work. Way back in the corner of her mind is a thought she is almost too frightened to shine a light on: one day she will run away. Recommended by Pat Pledger.

**Under the Cold Bright Lights** by Garry Disher. The young detectives call Alan Auhl a retread, but that doesn't faze him. He does things his own way—and gets results. He still lives with his ex-wife, off and on, in a big house full of random boarders and hard-luck stories. And he's still a cop, even though he retired from Homicide some years ago. He works cold cases now. Like the death of John Elphick—his daughters still convinced he was murdered, the coroner not so sure. Or the skeleton that's just been found under a concrete slab. Or the doctor who killed two wives and a girlfriend, and left no evidence at all. Auhl will stick with these cases until justice is done. One way or another. (Publisher) Recommended by Pat Pledger.

**All the light we cannot see** by Anthony Doerr. 2015 Pulitzer Prize. A beautiful, stunningly ambitious novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths

collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Pulse Points: Stories** by Jennifer Down. The characters in Jennifer Down's *Pulse Points* live in small dusty towns, glittering exotic cities and slow droll suburbs; they are mourners, survivors and perpetrators. (Publisher) Recommended by Karys McEwen.

**Cell 7** by Kerry Drewery. YA. A world where justice and the fate of those accused of murder is decided by the public, but has moved on from the Roman Gladiator 'thumbs up or thumbs down' public vote, to a public vote by telephone. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Day 7** by Kerry Drewery. YA. Martha Honeydew has been released from the terrifying Cell 7. But despite her new freedom, the corrupt judicial system is still tracking Martha's every move. And Isaac, her only trusted friend, is now imprisoned in the very same cells she was. Isaac saved Martha's life, it is only right she now save his. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Wreck** by Fleur Ferris. YA. Things take an unexpected turn, however, when Tamara Bennett arrives home to find her house ransacked and her life in danger. What is this mysterious note? And why does it mean so much to one of Australia's most powerful media moguls? (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet, Pat Pledger.

**Burke and Wills** by Peter FitzSimons. Melbourne, 20 August 1860. In an ambitious quest to be the first Europeans to cross the harsh Australian continent, the Victorian Exploring Expedition sets off, farewelled by 15,000 cheering well-wishers. Led by Robert O'Hara Burke, a brave man totally lacking in the bush skills necessary for his task; surveyor and meteorologist William Wills; and 17 others, the expedition took 20 tons of equipment carried on six wagons, 23 horses and 26 camels. (Publisher) Recommended by Paul Pledger.

**Fight like a girl** by Clementine Ford. With wit, insight and glorious, righteous rage, Clementine Ford lays out all the ways in which girls and women are hurt and held back, and unapologetically demands that the world do better. (Publisher) Recommended by Karys McEwen.

**My Side of the Diamond** by Sally Gardner. YA. Jazmin has been shunned ever since her best friend Becky disappeared. But what happened to Becky? Because she didn't simply disappear - she jumped off a tall building and was never seen again, almost as if she had vanished into thin air - but of course that couldn't be possible. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Joe Cinque's Consolation** by Helen Garner. In October 1997, a clever young law student at ANU made a bizarre plan to murder her devoted boyfriend after a dinner party at their house. Some of the dinner guests – most of them university students – had heard rumours of the plan. Nobody warned Joe Cinque. He died one Sunday, in his own bed, of a massive dose of Rohypnol and heroin. His girlfriend and her best friend were charged with murder. (Publisher) Recommended by Sandra Shannon.

**Invictus** by Ryan Graudin. YA. Farway Gaius McCarthy was born outside of time. The son of a time traveler from 2354 AD and a gladiator living in ancient Rome, Far's very existence defies the laws of nature. All he's ever wanted was to explore history for himself, but after failing his entrance exam into the government program, Far will have to settle for a position on the black market-captaining a time-traveling crew to steal valuables from the past. (Publisher) Recommended by Trish Buckley.

**Wolf by wolf** by Ryan Graudin. YA. The year is 1956, and the Axis powers of the Third Reich and Imperial Japan rule. To commemorate their Great Victory, they host the Axis

Tour: an annual motorcycle race across their conjoined continents. The prize? An audience with the highly reclusive Adolf Hitler at the Victor's ball in Tokyo. Yael, a former death camp prisoner, has witnessed too much suffering, and the five wolves tattooed on her arm are a constant reminder of the loved ones she lost. The resistance has given Yael one goal: Win the race and kill Hitler. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Blood by blood** by Ryan Graudin. YA. With their mission in danger, Yael and the resistance are ready to fight. Forced to run, life in the shadows for Yael, Luka and Felix isn't easy, especially when their enemy seems to know their every move. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Turtles All the Way Down** by John Green. YA. Sixteen-year-old Aza never intended to pursue the mystery of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there's a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Russell Pickett's son, Davis. (Publisher) Recommended by Trish Buckley, Liz Derouet.

**How to Stop Time** by Matt Haig. Tom Hazard is a history teacher living a quiet suburban life in a Cathedral town in England. He likes his job but has no real friends, spends his time on the internet or playing the piano, and pushes away anyone who tries to get close to him. But Tom has a secret. He suffers from progeria, a condition that causes the body to age ten times slower than normal. He looks 40 but is actually 408 (Publisher). Recommended by Kara Bystrom.

**The Bad-Ass librarians of Timbuktu** by Joshua Hammer. To save precious centuries-old Arabic texts from Al Qaeda, a band of librarians in Timbuktu pulls off a brazen heist worthy of *Ocean's Eleven*. (Publisher) Recommended and reviewed by Michael Jorgen. <http://newtownreviewofbooks.com.au/2016/11/03/joshua-hammer-bad-ass-librarians-timbuktu-race-save-worlds-precious-manuscripts-reviewed-michael-jongen/>

**Homodeus** by Yuval Noah Harari. *Homo Deus* explores the projects, dreams and nightmares that will shape the twenty-first century – from overcoming death to creating artificial life. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Sapiens A Brief History of Humankind** by Yuval Noah Harari. *A thrilling account of humankind's extraordinary history - from insignificant apes to rulers of the world* (Publisher). Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**The dry** by Jane Harper. Luke Hadler turns a gun on his wife and child, then himself. The farming community of Kiewarra is facing life and death choices daily. If one of their own broke under the strain, well ... When Federal Police investigator Aaron Falk returns to Kiewarra for the funerals, he is loath to confront the people who rejected him twenty years earlier. But when his investigative skills are called on, the facts of the Hadler case start to make him doubt this murder-suicide charge. (Publisher) Michelle Janik-Sands, Sue Warren

**Force of nature** by Jane Harper. Five women reluctantly pick up their backpacks and start walking along the muddy track. Only four come out the other side. The hike through the rugged Giralang Ranges is meant to take the office colleagues out of their air-conditioned comfort zone and teach resilience and team building. At least that is what the corporate retreat website advertises. Federal Police Agent Aaron Falk has a particularly keen interest in the whereabouts of the missing bushwalker. Alice Russell is the whistle blower in his latest case - and Alice knew secrets. About the company she worked for and the people she worked with. (Publisher). Recommended by Pat Pledger, Michelle Janik-Sands.

**Because of You** by Pip Harry. YA. Tiny is an eighteen-year-old girl living on the streets in Sydney, running from her small-town past. She finds short-term accommodation at Hope Lane – a shelter for the homeless – where she meets Nola, a high school student on volunteer placement. Both girls share their love of words through the Hope Lane writing group. Can they share their secrets, too? (Publisher) Recommended by Trish Buckley.

**Imagine Me Gone** by Adam Haslett. Man Booker Prize nominee. When Margaret's fiancé is hospitalized for depression, she faces a choice: carry on with their planned marriage, or back away. She decides to marry him. *Imagine Me Gone* is the unforgettable story of what unfolds from this act of love. At the heart is the couple's eldest son, Michael, a brilliant, anxious music fanatic who makes sense of the world through parody. Over the decades, his younger siblings – savvy, responsible Celia and sensitive, meticulous Alec – struggle along with their mother to care for Michael's increasingly troubled and precarious existence. (Publisher). Recommended by Kevin Whitney.

**Before the fall** by Noah Hawley. Down-on-his-luck artist Scott Burroughs would usually take the ferry back to New York from Martha's Vineyard, but he is unexpectedly offered a spare seat on the Bateman family's private jet. Then just minutes after take-off, the plane crashes into the ocean and of the eight passengers and three crew, only Scott and the Batemans' small son, JJ, are left alive. (Publisher) Recommended by Mary Davidson, Bridget Schaumann.

**The Cleaner** by Elisabeth Herrmann. 'For fans of *Child 44*, *The Lives of Others* and *Stasi Child*, *The Cleaner* is a gripping thriller that will chill and intrigue as the sins of the past catch up with the secrets of the present.' (Book Depository) Recommended by Kerry Neary.

**Assassin's Fate** by Robin Hobb. *Fitz and the Fool Trilogy* : Book 3. Prince FitzChivalry Farseer's daughter Bee was violently abducted from *Withywoods* by Servants of the Four in their search for the Unexpected Son, foretold to wield great power. With Fitz in pursuit, the Servants fled through a Skill-pillar, leaving no trace. (Publisher) Recommended by Pat Pledger.

**Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine** by Gail Honeyman. Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend. (Publisher) Excellent book; but very, very sad...she is not "completely fine." Recommended by Anne Weaver, Shan Kelly and Trish Buckley.

**The golden child** by Wendy James. Shortlisted for the 2017 Ned Kelly Award for Best Fiction. Blogger Lizzy's life is buzzing, happy, normal. Two gorgeous children, a handsome husband, destiny under control. For her real-life alter-ego Beth, things are unravelling. Tensions are simmering...Then a classmate of one daughter is callously bullied and the finger of blame is pointed at Beth's clever, beautiful child. Shattered, shamed and frightened, two families must negotiate worlds of cruelty they are totally ill-equipped for. (Publisher) Highly recommended by Jen Johnson.

**The Music Shop** by Rachel Joyce. Frank has a gift for finding his customers the music they need to hear. When he meets Ilsa Brauchmann, a mysterious and beautiful woman with no ear for music, and engaged to another man, he falls in love. She is way above him, she will never be his, but he will take her on a journey through music. (Publisher) Recommended by Nicole Yule.

**The Library: A catalogue of wonders** by Stuart Kells. Stuart Kells explores the bookish places, real and fictitious, that continue to capture our imaginations.

(Publisher) recommended and reviewed by Michael Jorgen  
<http://newtownreviewofbooks.com.au/2017/11/14/stuart-kells-library-catalogue-wonders-reviewed-michael-jongen/>

**The Good People** by Hannah Kent. Alone, hedged in by rumour, Mary and her mistress seek out the only person in the valley who might be able to help Micheál. For although her neighbours are wary of her, it is said that old Nance Roche has the knowledge. That she consorts with Them, the Good People. And that only she can return those whom they have taken..(Publisher) Recommended by Sue Warren.

**The Choke** by Sofie Laguna. Abandoned by her mother and only occasionally visited by her secretive father, Justine is raised by her pop, a man tormented by visions of the Burma Railway. Justine finds sanctuary in Pop's chooks and The Choke, where the banks of the Murray River are so narrow it seems they might touch - a place of staggering natural beauty. But the river can't protect Justine from danger. Her father is a criminal, and the world he exposes her to can be lethal. (Publishser) Recommended by Sandra Shannon

**The Girl in the Spider's Web** by David Lagercrantz. Continuing Stieg Larsson's Millennium Series - Book 4. Recommended by Kerry Neary.

**The Devil in the White City** by Erik Larson. Intertwines the true tale of the 1893 World's Fair and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction. (Publisher) Recommended by Michelle Janik-Sands.

**If This is a Man** by Primo Levi. Classic memoir of The Camps (Publisher) Recommended by Michelle Janik-Sands

**An Isolated Incident** by Emily Maguire. Shortlisted for the 2017 Miles Franklin Literary Award. When 25-year-old Bella Michaels is brutally murdered in the small town of Strathdee, the community is stunned and a media storm descends. Unwillingly thrust into the eye of that storm is Bella's beloved older sister, Chris, a barmaid at the local pub, whose apparent easygoing nature conceals hard-won wisdom and the kind of street-smarts only experience can bring. (Publisher) Recommended by Penny Szentkuti.

**Tell the Truth, Shame the Devil** by Melina Marchetta. Chief Inspector Bish Ortleay of the London Met, divorced and still grieving the death of his son, has been drowning his anger in Scotch. Something has to give, and he's no sooner suspended from the force than a busload of British students is subject to a deadly bomb attack across the Channel. Bish's daughter is one of those on board. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet, Pat Pledger.

**Reservoir 13** by Jon McGregor. A teenage girl on holiday has gone missing in the hills at the heart of England. The villagers are called up to join the search, fanning out across the moors as the police set up roadblocks and a crowd of news reporters descends on their usually quiet home. Meanwhile, there is work that must still be done: cows milked, fences repaired, stone cut, pints poured, beds made, sermons written, a pantomime rehearsed. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Release** by Patrick Ness. YA It's Saturday, it's summer and, although he doesn't know it yet, everything in Adam Thorn's life is going to fall apart. But maybe, just maybe, he'll find freedom from the release. Time is running out though, because way across town, a ghost has risen from the lake.(Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Little Fires Everywhere** by Celeste Ng. Everyone in Shaker Heights was talking about it that summer: how Isabelle, the last of the Richardson children, had finally gone around the bend and burned the house down. (Publisher) Recommended by Karys McEwen, Bridget Schaumann.

**Frogkisser** by Garth Nix. Princess Anya needs to see a wizard about a frog. It's not her frog, it's her sister's. And it's not a frog, it's actually a prince. A prince who was once in love with Anya's sister, but has now been turned into a frog by their evil stepstepfather. And Anya has made a 'sister promise' that she will find a way to return Prince Denholm to human form. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet, Pat Pledger.

**Draekora** (The Medoran Chronicles #3) by Lynette Noni . With Aven Dalmarta now hiding in the shadows of Meya, Alex is desperate to save Jordan and keep the Rebel Prince from taking more lives. Training day and night to master the enhanced immortal blood in her veins, Alex undertakes a dangerous Meyarin warrior trial that separates her from those she loves and leaves her stranded in a place where nothing is as it should be. (Publisher) Excellent fantasy series by Queensland author. Recommended by Anne Weaver.

**The Sudden Appearance of Hope** by Claire North. World Fantasy Award 2017. My name is Hope Arden. I am the girl the world forgets. It started when I was sixteen years old. A father forgetting to drive me to school. A mother setting the table for three, not four. A friend who looks at me and sees a stranger. No matter what I do, the words I say, the crimes I commit - you will never remember who I am. That makes my life tricky. It also makes me dangerous (Publisher) This and other titles by Claire North are recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Carthage** by Joyce Carol Oates. Zeno Mayfield's daughter has gone missing in the wilds of the Adirondacks. But when the community of Carthage joins a father's frantic search for the girl, they discover instead the unlikeliest of suspects – a decorated Iraq veteran with close ties to the Mayfield family. As grisly evidence mounts against the troubled war hero, the family must wrestle with the possibility of having lost a daughter forever. (Publisher) recommended by Libby Saxby.

**The Essex Serpent** by Sarah Perry. Cora is a well-to-do London widow who moves to the Essex parish of Aldwinter, and Will is the local vicar. They meet as their village is engulfed by rumours that the mythical Essex Serpent, once said to roam the marshes claiming human lives, has returned. (Publisher). Recommended by Nicole Yule.

**The Toymaker** by Liam Pieper. Adam Kulakov likes his life. He's on the right side of middle age; the toy company he owns brightens the lives of millions of children around the world; and he has more money than he can ever spend, a wife and child he adores, and as many mistresses as he can reasonably hide from them. And he is not the only one with secrets. In 1944, Adam's grandfather, Arkady, was imprisoned in Auschwitz and given an impossible choice. (Publisher) Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Barkskins** by Annie Proulx. In the late seventeenth century two penniless young Frenchmen, René Sel and Charles Duquet, arrive in New France. Bound to a feudal lord, a "seigneur," for three years in exchange for land, they become wood-cutters – barkskins. René suffers extraordinary hardship, oppressed by the forest he is charged with clearing. He is forced to marry a Mi'kmaw woman and their descendants live trapped between two inimical cultures. But Duquet, crafty and ruthless, runs away from the seigneur, becomes a fur trader, then sets up a timber business. (Publisher) Recommended by Shan Kelly.

**Gap Year in Ghost Town** by Michael Pryor. YA. Anton Marin and his father are on high alert after a spike in ghost manifestations. Anton wants to help the ghosts. Rani

Cross wants to slice and dice them. And they both need to work together to keep the city safe. A smart, snappy, funny and scary ghost-hunting adventure. (Publisher) Recommended by Trish Buckley, Pat Pledger.

**La Belle Sauvage: The Book of Dust - Volume 1** by Philip Pullman. YA. Eleven-year-old Malcolm Polstead and his dæmon, Asta, live with his parents at the Trout Inn near Oxford. Across the River Thames (which Malcolm navigates often using his beloved canoe, a boat by the name of La Belle Sauvage) is the Godstow Priory where the nuns live. Malcolm learns they have a guest with them; a baby by the name of Lyra Belacqua (Publisher). Recommended by Sue Warren.

**The Alice Network** by Kate Quinn. Two women - a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War I and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947 - are brought together in a mesmerizing story of courage and redemption. (Publisher) Recommended by Sue Warren.

**The Flood** by Ian Rankin. Mary Miller had always been an outcast. Burnt in a chemical mix as a young girl, sympathy for her quickly faded when the young man who pushed her in died in a mining accident just two days later. From then on she was regarded with a mixture of suspicion and fascination by her God-fearing community. (Publisher) His first novel; Rebus not yet on the scene. A psychologically gripping village story of suspicion and witchcraft. Recommended by Kerry Neary.

**The Museum of Modern Love** by Heather Rose. (Stella Prize winner, 2017). The Museum of Modern Love is a novel inspired by the performance artist Marina Abramovic. A fictionalised story revolves around Abramovic's MoMA exhibition; The Artist is Present in New York City. Arky is a composer who is struggling with being separated from his wife. He finds himself drawn to the exhibition where Abramovic sits silently at a table and gallery visitors in turn, sit opposite her and return her gaze. Over the course of the seventy-five day performance Arky meets other captivated onlookers and contemplates his past, present and future. The sense of place and the expertly drawn characters had me engrossed in their lives from the first page until the last. My love of New York City may have enhanced my enjoyment of the book but I think any adult or senior student interested in art and relationships would also enjoy it (Karen Malbon). Recommended by Karen Malbon, Dee McQueen, Penny Szentkuti.

**Lincoln In The Bardo** by George Saunders. Winner of the Man Booker Prize. February 1862. The Civil War is less than one year old. The fighting has begun in earnest, and the nation has begun to realize it is in for a long, bloody struggle. Meanwhile, President Lincoln's beloved eleven-year-old son, Willie, lies upstairs in the White House, gravely ill. In a matter of days, despite predictions of a recovery, Willie dies and is laid to rest in a Georgetown cemetery. Publisher. Recommended as 'Unusual, unexpectedly funny at times, moving and truly unforgettable (I rarely wax lyrical over a book but this is quite original)' by Kevin Whitney. Also recommended by Deb Connell.

**Salt to the sea** by Ruta Sepetys. Winner of the 2017 Carnegie Medal. YA. It's early 1945 and a group of people trek across Germany, bound together by their desperation to reach the ship that can take them away from the war-ravaged land. Four young people, each haunted by their own dark secret, narrate their unforgettable stories. Recommended by Craig Edgman.

**The Sparrow** by Mary Doria Russell. *The Sparrow* tells the story of a charismatic Jesuit priest and linguist, Emilio Sandoz, who leads a scientific mission entrusted with a profound task: to make first contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life. The mission begins in faith, hope, and beauty, but a series of small misunderstandings brings it to a catastrophic end. (Publisher) Recommended others by this author as well. Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.



**The Collapsing Empire** by John Scalzi. In the far future, humanity has left Earth to create a glorious empire. Now this interstellar network of worlds faces disaster - but can three individuals save their people? A scientist will risk his life to inform the empire's ruler. A scion of a Merchant House stumbles upon conspirators seeking power. And the new Empress of the Interdependency must battle lies, rebellion and treason. Yet as they work to save a civilization on the brink of collapse, others have very different plans . (Publisher) (Strong language). Recommended by Pat Pledger.

**The Gulf** by Anna Spargo-Ryan. Skye's sixteen, and her mum's got yet another new boyfriend. Trouble is, Jason's bad news. Really bad. Now mum's quit her job and they're all moving north to Port Flinders, population nobody. (Publisher) Recommended by Karys McEwen.

**The Light Between Oceans** by M.L. Stedman. 1926. Tom Sherbourne is a young lighthouse keeper on a remote island off Western Australia. The only inhabitants of Janus Rock, he and his wife Isabel live a quiet life, cocooned from the rest of the world. It had a absorbing dilemma, set in early 20th century WA and a lighthouse off the WA coast, and there were well developed protagonists and other supporting characters. There was no distracting sub plot and it was a real page-turner for me. Recommended by Anne-Marie Nicholls.

**My Absolute Darling** by Gabriel Tallent. At 14, Turtle Alveston knows the use of every gun on her wall; That chaos is coming and only the strong will survive it; That her daddy loves her more than anything else in this world. And he'll do whatever it takes to keep her with him. She doesn't know why she feels so different from the other girls at school; Why the line between love and pain can be so hard to see; Why making a friend may be the bravest and most terrifying thing she has ever done And what her daddy will do when he finds out (Publisher) Comes with warnings but it is a wonderful book recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**The Goldfinch** by Donna Tart. Winner of Pulitzer Prize For Fiction 2014. Aged thirteen, Theo Decker, son of a devoted mother and a reckless, largely absent father, survives an accident that otherwise tears his life apart. Alone and rudderless in New York, he is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. He is tormented by an unbearable longing for his mother, and down the years clings to one thing that reminds him of her: a small, strangely captivating painting that ultimately draws him into the criminal underworld. As he grows up, Theo learns to glide between the drawing rooms of the rich and the dusty antiques store where he works. He is alienated and in love - and his talisman, the painting, places him at the centre of a narrowing, ever more dangerous circle. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**The Hate U Give** by Angie Thomas. YA. Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer (Publisher). Recommended by Kara Bystrom.

**Mr Gandy's Grand Tour** by Alan Titchmarsh. Timothy Gandy has kept his lifetime's ambition secret for forty years. Now, suddenly (if tragically) released from the hen-pecked tedium of his ordinary existence, he is unexpectedly free to realize his dreams. He will embark on a Grand Tour of Europe, following in the footsteps of the aristocrats of the eighteenth century. (Publisher). Recommended by Nicole Yule.

**Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow** by Jessica Townsend. YA. Morrigan Crow is cursed. Born on an unlucky day, she is blamed for all local misfortunes, from hailstorms to heart attacks - and, worst of all, the curse means that Morrigan is doomed to die at midnight on Eventide. But as Morrigan awaits her fate, a strange and remarkable man named Jupiter North appears. Chased by black-smoke hounds and

shadowy hunters on horseback, he whisks her away into the safety of a secret, magical city called Nevermoor. (Publisher): Reputed to be next Harry Potter; not so sure, but still a great fantasy read for kids and kids at heart. Recommended by Anne Weaver.

**The House at the End of Hope Street** by Menna van Praag. When Alba Ashby, the youngest Ph.D. student at Cambridge University, suffers the Worst Event of Her Life, she finds herself at the door of 11 Hope Street. There, a beautiful older woman named Peggy invites Alba to stay on the house's unusual conditions: she'll have ninety-nine nights, and no more, to turn her life around. (Publisher). Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**Hillbilly Elegy A Memoir of A Family and Culture In Crisis** by J.D. Vance. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**44 Days: 75 Squadron and the Fight for Australia** (the Epic Battle in the Skies Above Port Moresby) by Michael Veitch. The epic World War II story of the heroes of Australia's 75 Squadron - and the 44 days when these brave and barely trained pilots fought alone against the Japanese. (Publisher). Recommended by Deb Connell, Paul Pledger.

**Ballad for a Mad Girl** by Vikki Wakefield. YA. Everyone knows seventeen-year-old Grace Foley is a bit mad. She's a prankster and a risk-taker, and she's not afraid of anything except losing. As part of the long-running feud between two local schools in Swanston, Grace accepts a challenge to walk the pipe. That night she experiences something she can't explain. The funny girl isn't laughing anymore. She's haunted by voices and visions - but nobody believes a girl who cries wolf. (Publisher). Recommended by Pat Pledger.

**The End of the world running club** by Adrian J Walker. An original and powerful post-apocalyptic thriller, perfect for fans of *The Martian*. Do the impossible Or lose your family forever... (Publisher). Recommended by Mary Davidson.

**Sing Unburied Sing** by Jesmyn Ward. Jojo is thirteen years old and trying to understand what it means to be a man. His mother, Leonie, is in constant conflict with herself and those around her. She is black and her children's father is white. Embattled in ways that reflect the brutal reality of her circumstances, she wants to be a better mother, but can't put her children above her own needs, especially her drug use. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**Artemis** by Andy Weir. Jazz is a small time criminal, subsidising work as a porter on the moon with smuggling a little contraband. But it's never enough. When she's offered the chance to get rich quick she jumps at it. But planning the perfect crime in 1/6th gravity was never going to be easy, especially as there is a conspiracy at the heart of Artemis. (Publisher) Recommended by Bridget Schaumann.

**The Underground Railroad** by Colson Whitehead. 2017 Pulitzer Prize Winner. Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. Life is hellish for all the slaves, but Cora is an outcast even among her fellow Africans, and she is coming into womanhood; even greater pain awaits. Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the *Underground Railroad*, and they plot their escape. Matters do not go as planned - Cora kills a young white boy who tries to capture her - but they manage to find a station and head north. (Publisher). Recommended by Liz Derouet, Kara Bystrom.

**Opal Plumstead** by Jacqueline Wilson. Opal Plumstead might be plain, but she has always been fiercely intelligent. Yet her scholarship and dreams of university are snatched away when her father is sent to prison, and fourteen-year-old Opal must start work at the Fairy Glen sweet factory to support her family. (Publisher). (WW I family story for Y7's - Y9s ). Recommended by Rochelle Veness.

**Wave me Goodbye** by Jacqueline Wilson. September, 1939. As the Second World War begins, ten-year-old Shirley is sent away on a train with her schoolmates. She doesn't know where she's going, or what's going to happen to her when she gets there. All she has been told is that she's going on 'a little holiday'. (Publisher) (WW II evacuee story - for Y6 - Y8s ). Recommended by Rochelle Veness.

**Tin Man** by Sarah Winman. Ellis and Michael are twelve when they first become friends, and for a long time it is just the two of them, cycling the streets of Oxford, teaching themselves how to swim, discovering poetry, and dodging the fists of overbearing fathers. And then one day this closest of friendships grows into something more. But then we fast forward a decade or so, to find that Ellis is married to Annie, and Michael is nowhere in sight. Which leads to the question, what happened in the years between? This is almost a love story. But it's not as simple as that. "Goodreads review. Recommended by Sandra Mannion.

**Underground Airlines** by Ben Winters. It is the present-day, and the world is as we know it. Except for one thing: slavery still exists. Victor has escaped his life as a slave, but his freedom came at a high price. Striking a bargain with the government, he has to live his life working as a bounty hunter. And he is the best they've ever trained (Publisher). Recommended by Kara Bystrom.

**This is my Song** by Richard Yaxley. In the early 1940s in Czechoslovakia, Rafael Ullmann and his family are sent to Terezin, the so-called model ghetto for Jewish artists. In the 1970s in Canada, Annie Ullmann lives a predictable, lonely life on a prairie with her reclusive father and deaf-dumb mother. Thirty years later, in Australia, Joe Hawker is uncertain about himself and his future. (Publisher). Recommended by Liz Derouet.

**The cemetery of forgotten books** series by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (**The Shadow of the Wind** , **The Angel's Game** and **The Prisoner of Heaven** ) Set during the period of the Spanish civil war and WWII, the books are beautifully written. The stories are a little melodramatic, gothic and at times brutal, but with touches of humour as well. Recommended by Roxanne McIvor

**Young Jane Young** by Gabrielle Zevin. Aviva Grossman, an ambitious Congressional intern in Florida, makes the life-changing mistake of having an affair with her boss - who is beloved, admired, successful, and very married - and blogging about it. When the affair comes to light, the Congressman doesn't take the fall, but Aviva does, and her life is over before it hardly begins. (Publisher). Recommended by Karys McEwen.